

**NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
SOUTHEAST REGION**

NEWS RELEASE

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**NOAA PROPOSES PENALTIES OF \$12,500 AGAINST
TWO PANAMA CITY RED SNAPPER FISHERMEN
*UNLAWFUL FISHING ACTIVITIES AGGRAVATED BY LIES***

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration has charged two Panama City, Fla., fishermen in separate cases with multiple Magnuson-Stevens Act violations and proposes to assess them with civil penalties totaling \$12,500 and a permit sanction of 45 days.

James E. Hoffman, operator of the F/V JAMIE LEE, allegedly harvested red snapper while the recreational and commercial seasons were closed, filleted fish at sea, and hid them in a compartment aboard the vessel. Bill P. Archer, owner and operator of the F/V SEMINOLE WIND, allegedly exceeded the bag and possession limit for red snapper and filleted fish at sea. Both fishermen allegedly made false statements to officers concerning their fishing activities which resulted in a proposed penalty of \$2,500 being added to their base assessments. Hoffman was assessed a total of \$7,000, and Archer was assessed a total of \$5,500 plus a 45-day permit sanction. They will have 30 days from the date they were notified to either pay the penalties, seek to have them modified, or request a hearing before an administrative law judge to deny or contest all or any part of the charges and penalties assessed.

"The discovery and investigation of these violations was made possible because of the outstanding partnership that's in place between the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission Enforcement Division and NOAA Fisheries' Office for

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Law Enforcement," said NOAA Enforcement attorney Cynthia Fenyk. "Fishermen must understand that illegal fishing activities will not be tolerated. Making false statements to authorized officers and any effort to conceal illegal fishing can only worsen their predicament."

NOAA Fisheries urges citizens to report fishery violations during weekly business hours of 8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. Eastern, to its Southeast Region Law Enforcement Division at (727) 570-5344, or after hours and weekends at its National Enforcement Hotline at (800) 853-1964.

This and other Southeast Regional news releases and fishery bulletins are available on the region's Internet home page: <http://caldera.sero.nmfs.gov> or NOAA's Internet home page, <http://www.noaa.gov/public-affairs/press99.html>.

NOAA Fisheries is an agency of the Department of Commerce's National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. The agency conducts scientific research and provides services and products to support fisheries management, fisheries development, trade, and industry assistance, enforcement, and protected species and habitat conservation programs.

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